10 Quotes and Paraphrases from Simi Linton’s article, “Reassigning Meaning”

By Jisu Pang

1) Quote: The decision to assign medical meanings to disability has had many and varied consequences for disabled people. One clear benefit has been the medical treatments that have increased the well-being and vitality of many disabled people, indeed have saved people’s lives. (Page 224)

Paraphrase: There have been many different changes for disabled people from the medical meanings to disability. One change that is a great benefit is the medical treatments that are positively helping disabled people’s lives.

2) The disabled or the handicapped was replaced in the mid-70s by people with disabilities to maintain disability as a characteristic of the individual, as opposed to the defining variable. (Page 225)  
  
 Paraphrase: People with disabilities, since the mid-70s, are called people with disabilities instead of disabled because their disability is a characteristic, not who they are.

3) Quote: The term able disabled and handicapable have had a fairly short shelf life. They are used, it seems, to refute common stereotypes of incompetence. (Page 226)

Paraphrase: Because the terms able disabled and handicapable are used mostly to prove the usual stereotypes of disabilities incorrect, they are not used often in one’s vocabulary.

4) Quote: Terms such as physically challenged, the able disabled, handicapable, and special people/children surface at different times and places. They are rarely used by disabled activists and scholars (except with palpable irony). (Page 226)

Paraphrase: Terms, such as physically challenged and special people, are used by different people in different times and situations but they are not often said by people that work for the disabled.

5) Quote: Many people have told me that when family pictures were taken as they were growing up, they were removed from their wheelchairs, or they were shown only from the waist up, or they were excluded from pictures altogether. (Page 229)

Paraphrase: Many people in wheelchairs have told the author, Simi Linton, that in their family photographs, they were photographed with no sight of their wheelchairs.

6) Quote: The families of these children or the school personnel might even persist with this plan, believing that these actions have a positive effect on the children, that they demonstrate that the disabled child is “just like everybody else.” (Page 230)  
  
Paraphrase: Families and staff of the school of these disabled children believe that in pictures, they should be shown without their wheelchair because that will make them feel like everyone else.

7) Quote: In the second comparison, the “handicapped children” are labeled abnormal by default. Setting up these dichotomies avoids concrete discussion of the ways the two groups of children actually differ, devalues the children with disabilities, and forces an “us and them” division of the population. (Page 231)

Paraphrase: From the second comparison, people view “handicapped children” as abnormal. Handicapped children are being undermined when society labels them “abnormal” and creates a barrier of the population.

8) Quote: In addition, disabled people are rarely depicted on television, in films, or in fiction as being in control of their own lives—in charge or actively seeking out and obtaining what they want and need. (Page 232)

Paraphrase: Disabled people are not usually shown in media and fiction as they truly are, people with control and vigorously pursuing their goals.   
  
9) Quote: More often, disabled people are depicted as pained by their fate or, if happy, it is through personal triumph over their adversity. (Page 232)

Paraphrase: Usually, disabled people’s emotions are portrayed as if they were related to their disabilities.

10) Quote: It is interesting that AIDS activists intentionally use the phrase living with AIDS rather than dying from AIDS, not to deny the reality of AIDS but to emphasize that people are often actively engaged in living even in the face of a serious illness.(Page 233)

Paraphrase: AIDS activists know the reality of the fate of people with AIDS but they would rather say the phrase, living with AIDS, rather than dying from it because people with AIDS are still living.

Works Cited

Linton, Simi. "17." *The Disability Studies Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.